

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

October 19, 2000
MAG Office
302 North First Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Jim Hull, Mesa, Chair	Cary Parker, Maricopa County
*Betsy Wise, Carefree	Duncan Miller, Paradise Valley
*Bill Mitchell, Chandler	*Sandy Teetsel, Peoria
Peter Putterman, Fountain Hills	*Greg Binder, Phoenix
Dave Kollar for Shawn Woolley, Gilbert	John Laue, Tempe
*Jerry Wightman, Glendale	Rosemarie Booth for Ralph Velez, Tolleson
John Imig, Goodyear	*Craig Stender, ADOT
Lynn Dunn, Litchfield Park	*Randi Alcott, RPTA
Debbie Kohn, Scottsdale	

*Members neither present nor represented by proxy

OTHERS PRESENT

Heidi Pahl, MAG	Tiffany Lopez Powell, MAG
Rita Walton, MAG	Audrey Skidmore, MAG

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Chairman, Jim Hull.

2. Approval of September 1, 2000 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Debbie Kohn, seconded by Peter Putterman and unanimously recommended to approve the September 1, 2000 meeting minutes.

3. Prioritization of Projects for Regional Federal Funding: Draft FY 2002-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Rita Walton explained that the purpose of the MAG Telecommunications Advisory Group (TAG) meeting today is to prioritize TAG transportation projects in this region for federal funding consideration. Ms. Walton noted that the prioritization would be included in the Transportation Review Committee mail-out on October 23, 2000.

Rita Walton mentioned that there had been conversations with Dennis Mittelstedt of Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) regarding whether or not the MAGTAG projects would qualify

for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Ms. Walton noted that Mr. Mittelstedt informed MAG that the Teleconferencing and Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing would not qualify for CMAQ funding since the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System Project was a three year demonstration project with CMAQ monies for only those three years. Ms. Walton noted that MAG would consider adding Teleconferencing and Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and consider using Surface Transportation Funds (STP) for this item.

Rita Walton noted that Mr. Mittelstedt said that the Telecommunications Strategic Plan would not qualify for CMAQ funding because planning projects are not eligible for CMAQ funding. Ms. Walton noted that MAG might decide to use planning funds or STP funds for the Telecommunications Strategic Plan. Ms. Walton informed the TAG that Mr. Mittelstedt wanted to see the results of the Regional Community Wide Area Network (RCWAN) Study prior to stating whether the RCWAN Implementation would receive CMAQ funding.

Rita Walton stated that she would recommend that TAG prioritize these projects in two ways: one, without consideration of the funding source, two, prioritize according to CMAQ eligibility.

Debbie Kohn asked if MAG staff had a recommendation for prioritization. Rita Walton responded yes, she would recommend the Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing first, the Telecommunications Strategic Plan second and Regional WAN Implementation third. Ms. Walton stated that this recommendation is based on the fact that hub site support for videoconferencing is the most important and she would place the telecommunications strategic plan second so that it does not get lost behind the 2 million dollar Regional Community WAN Implementation.

Jim Hull asked if the Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing will become a MAG operational cost. Rita Walton replied yes, that MAG has been funding the program with non-CMAQ funds.

Peter Putterman asked if the Regional Community WAN Implementation was still a joint project between the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Committee and TAG. Rita Walton replied that MAGTAG is taking the lead on this, as the Regional WAN Implementation is a top priority for MAGTAG and that TAG does projects of a regional nature whereas the ITS Committee prioritizes city projects and therefore may not place the Regional WAN Implementation as high in the list of priorities as MAGTAG would.

Debbie Kohn asked if placing the Telecommunications Strategic Plan second would lessen MAGTAG's chance of having it accelerated in the TIP. Rita Walton clarified that the TRC will only consider CMAQ funded projects and that the Telecommunications Strategic Plan will not be CMAQ funded because it is a plan. Ms. Walton suggested that MAG staff take the three priorities to internal staff to support these projects in the next UPWP. She noted that only the Regional Community WAN Implementation will be considered for CMAQ funds due to the nature of the requirements.

Jim Hull asked for an explanation of the scope for the Telecommunications Strategic Plan. Rita Walton responded that the last strategic plan was conducted six years ago and the mission and goals of MAGTAG has changed since that time. Debbie Kohn added that the purpose was to provide a better focus for the MAGTAG.

Jim Hull recapped by stating that because of the restrictions with CMAQ funds, the MAGTAG did not have very many options as to what requests to submit to TRC for approval. Mr. Hull noted that the RCWAN Study represents a great deal of future benefit. He expressed concern with placing the RCWAN third as it may seem as the TAG's lowest priority.

Rita Walton responded by explaining that even though all the projects that TAG ranks will not be considered for inclusion in the TIP we can still work to incorporate these other priorities into the MAG UPWP and push for internal support of these projects.

Cary Parker stated that because we are working with different funding sources, each is a different priority depending on the funding source.

Debbie Kohn requested clarification on the recommendations. Ms. Walton replied that if all projects were to be ranked, their priority would be Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing, Regional Community WAN Implementation and Telecommunications Strategic Plan. She further stated that if only the CMAQ projects were to be ranked, the RCWAN Implementation would be first.

It was moved by Debbie Kohn seconded by Peter Putterman and unanimously recommended to forward the Regional WAN Implementation to the TRC for inclusion in the TIP FY 2002-2006 for CMAQ funding. In addition the TAG ranked the projects in the following order: Telecommuting Hub Site Support, Training and Marketing, Regional Community WAN Implementation and Telecommunications Strategic Plan.

4. MAG Regional Videoconferencing System Project Update

Rita Walton explained that MAG was informed by Intellisys Group on September 29, 2000 that they closed six of their twenty-five offices. The local Tempe office was one of the six offices closed. Ms. Walton noted that Intellisys Group has assured MAG that they will continue to support the Regional Videoconferencing System out of their Denver office and find a local solution for ongoing service and support. She also stated that Intellisys Group senior management assured MAG that they will finish the project quickly and professionally, including all training and other requirements.

Rita Walton noted that the following week, Intellisys Group informed MAG that their assets were bought out by MCSi, which has 125 offices nationwide and performs mostly the same functions as Intellisys Group. Ms. Walton stated that Intellisys filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy as part of this purchase.

Debbie Kohn asked if the videoconferencing contract asked for Intellisys Group to provide a performance bond. Rita Walton stated yes. Rita Walton informed Debbie that MAG Legal Counsel is currently looking at whether or not there has been a breach of contract.

John Laue asked who is currently in control of the status of the project. Rita Walton responded that Intellisys Group remains responsible for the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System Project.

Jim Laue expressed concern about the future of the project due to the Intellisys bankruptcy and buy out. Mr. Laue thanked MAG staff for all of their effort during this time.

Jim Hull asked if Intellisys or MCSi were responsible for the videoconferencing equipment contract. Rita Walton responded that at this time Intellisys is responsible for the equipment contract. Rita Walton reported that MAG staff will have more answers by next MAGTAG meeting on October 26, 2000.

Jim Hull asked if MAG contracted with Intellisys for maintenance and support of the system. Rita Walton replied no. She explained that Intellisys Group and MCSi are looking into a local solution due to the fact that their support staff was released when the Intellisys offices were closed.

Jim Hull asked if MAG was required to bid out the contract for maintenance and support. Rita Walton informed that MAG Legal Counsel is looking into this matter and that she will have more information next week.

Jim Hull asked which MAG member agency sites currently do not have videoconferencing equipment. Heidi Pahl stated that Intellisys Group informed her that by the end of the week, approximately five sites will still be without videoconferencing equipment. These sites include: Queen Creek, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Wickenburg, Goodyear and Guadalupe. Ms. Pahl stated that Intellisys Group is planning to install videoconferencing units at Avondale, Litchfield Park and Scottsdale by the end of the week.

John Laue asked whether or not the facility issues with Qwest had been resolved. Heidi Pahl informed that Qwest has installed all of the 1FB's where they could and the majority of sites have ISDN BRI installed. She noted that Qwest plans to resolve the facility issues with ISDN BRI at the Town of Queen Creek and Goodyear by the end of the month. Ms. Pahl mentioned that the order for the OC12 for the Gila River Indian Community was completed. She noted that MAG and Maricopa County are working on the microwave solution for the Town of Wickenburg.

Jim Hull asked if Qwest was able to find sufficient cable pairs for Queen Creek. Heidi Pahl stated yes.

Jim Hull asked if MAG Regional Council had been made aware of the problems with Intellisys. Heidi Pahl informed the MAGTAG that at the October 4, 2000 Regional Council meeting, she gave an update on the MAG Regional Videoconferencing System Project and Regional Connections Project. She noted that as part of the presentation she informed Regional Council of the organizational changes at Intellisys and that they had closed six of twenty-five offices. Rita Walton mentioned that at the October 18, 2000 Management Committee meeting, Jim Bourey provided an update on the status of the project regarding Intellisys Group. Debbie Kohn asked if there were any questions from Management Committee. Rita Walton stated that at the Regional Council meeting one mayor commented about the viability of Intellisys Group. She noted that Mr. Bourey replied that staff is looking to the long term and that many providers are available.

Debbie Kohn asked if there was still going to be a kick-off for the videoconferencing project in December, 2000. Rita Walton replied no, as MAG must ensure the system works properly before scheduling any events.

Jim Hull asked about the status of the videoconference rooms at the MAG site. Heidi Pahl informed that the Palo Verde room currently has a dual 32 inch monitor system with some software missing

and only one of the three BRI channels working. Ms. Pahl noted that the custom room, Saguaro Room is approximately 75% complete and that Intellisys Group will be using a subcontractor to complete the custom room on Friday, October 20, 2000. Heidi Pahl mentioned that the multipoint control unit (MCU) is working but frequently goes down and the audio conference call system is working.

Peter Putterman asked about the level of support MAG could receive from VTEL and whether or not that was an option. Rita Walton stated that she understands that VTEL is moving into the support business. Ms. Walton informed the MAGTAG that VTEL sent a technician out to look at the MAG MCU and help resolve the problems with it.

Peter Putterman announced that he installed Office 2000 on Fountain Hills VTEL machine and it crashed the machine. Mr. Putterman asked if VTEL had resolved that issue. Rita Walton stated that in the next three months VTEL is coming out with the ability to install Office 2000 on the VTEL equipment. She noted that VTEL does not have problems with Office 1997 but that member agencies should not install this software on the VTEL equipment at this time.

Jim Hull expressed feelings of disappointment and frustration with this project but mentioned that he appreciated the effort from MAG staff.

Debbie Kohn asked when MAG would begin videoconference training. Heidi Pahl responded hopefully within three weeks providing the system is working properly.

5. Announcements and Public Input

There were not announcements or public input.

6. Date of Next Meetings

Jim Hull informed the TAG that the next meeting would be held October 26, 2000 at the MAG offices in the Saguaro Room. Lynn Dunn of Litchfield Park asked if she would be able to audio conference into the meeting. Heidi Pahl replied yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m.